



Ontario
fish and wildlife
Review

Vol. 13, No. 1 & 2, 1974



The city scene on the front cover (fooled you, didn't we) is part of Gerald McKeating's verbal and graphic message. Urbanites may be closer than they think to a diversity of wildlife in its natural state. See Page 3.



Brave Bill Lanning snapped the mighty maxima as it defended its holdings in the great egg robbery, an annual outrage plotted in Maple for the good of the species. Ken Faulkner confesses all, Page 9. See back cover, too.



An old house of hewn pine is practically imperishable and makes a fine hunting camp. John Macfie's pleasurable report begins on Page 15.

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Vol. 13, No. 1-2

Spring-Summer, 1974

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Ontario Fish and Wildlife Review is published quarterly by the Ministry of Natural Resources (Division of Fish and Wildlife), Parliament Buildings, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1W3. Permission to reprint material herein is hereby granted provided due credit is given to the author and this publication. Communications may be addressed to members of the editorial committee: F. P. Maher, J. L. Tiller, A. A. Wainio, and L. Whistance-Smith.

The goal of the Ministry of Natural Resources is to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and resource development for the continuous social and economic benefit of the people of Ontario, and to administer, protect and conserve public lands and waters.



Ministry of
Natural
Resources

Hon. Leo Bernier
Minister

Dr. J. K. Reynolds
Deputy Minister

HUNTERS, NATURALISTS, AND HABITAT

For the first time, the Ministry of Natural Resources provided a program to bring hunters and non-hunters together in thought and action.

At the Gananoque Provincial Wildlife Area, about forty people, both naturalists and hunters, participated in discussions about the "real" problem facing wildlife populations — habitat.

Biases were left at home. Hunters were not ashamed of having shot game animals, nor were naturalists defensive about being bird watchers. They met to learn more about wildlife management and hunting ethics. Heads were held high, the atmosphere was positive, and the experimental program was successful.

Times have changed. This co-operative meeting was a switch from the traditional confrontation between hunting and anti-hunting camps.

Depressing rhetoric by extremists, who use emotion to further their cause, can only benefit personal ambitions and mask the actual problems. Wildlife is not helped. Participants at Gananoque saw and learned about the habitat needs of wildlife and how all of us must work together for its preservation.

Be a Joiner. Actively support local, provincial and national organizations that help the true needs of wildlife. Give your physical and financial help.

Be a Doer. Help influence others by serving on committees, writing letters, making speeches, and personally improving habitat.

Be Informed. Increase your knowledge about wildlife and hunting.

Be a Teacher. Take a youngster by the hand and teach him about the outdoors.

Get Involved. Your informed attitudes should be heard. Habitat preservation is necessary.

D. E. Benson

Extension Wildlife Biologist

SYMPOSIUM

WILDLIFE IN URBAN CANADA

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

MAY 26-30, 1975

The University of Guelph, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and other co-sponsoring groups are planning a symposium on "Wildlife in Urban Canada" to be held at the University of Guelph from May 26 to May 30, 1975.

The symposium will bring together specialists interested in the problems and challenges of wildlife in urban areas. The program will include the presentation of papers, panel discussions, and workshop sessions.

For further information and an outline of the program, apply to Office of Continuing Education, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario.

LETTERS IN REVIEW

MARKED CANVASBACKS

Canvasbacks marked with colorful plumage dyes were recently released at key migrational concentration areas in the North Central states by wildlife research biologists of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The purpose of the color-marking program is to determine the migrational dispersal and wintering distribution of canvasbacks staging on the Upper Mississippi River.

During the 1974 fall migration, male canvasbacks were dyed different colors at concentration areas near LaCrosse, Wisconsin, and Keokuk, Iowa. The colors used were blue, yellow and pink.

Any observation of color-marked canvasbacks should be reported to the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center. The following information is requested: observer (name and address); date, time and location of observation (be specific); and color of

the bird (be descriptive). In addition, information on the activity of the bird, size of the flock, and species of ducks associated with the marked bird would be helpful.

This research on the migrational habitat and destinations of the canvasbacks is part of a comprehensive investigation to identify major factors influencing the population status of this species. Any observations of the color-marked canvasbacks would be greatly appreciated.

David L. Trauger
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Readers of 'Review' are invited to set forth their views in these columns. 'Review' welcomes suggestions and criticisms provided their purpose is the maintenance and enhancement of fish and wildlife resources.



Young minds need natural areas in cities to discover the secrets of nature.

WILDLIFE, PEOPLE AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

*Report and Photos by Gerald B. McKeating,
Interpretation Biologist, Wildlife Branch*

SOME years ago, I lived in a typical suburban subdivision of Metropolitan Toronto. Just north of it were fields, a pond and stream, common wildflowers, songbirds, an occasional American kestrel—nothing really exciting or unusual. It did, though, provide a natural habitat where the children of the subdivision could fish for chub, catch frogs, or do a multitude of other things that young, imaginative minds can propose. The area has long disappeared under concrete, and with it the opportunity for easy, unstructured contact with nature.

It has been estimated that 90 per cent of Ontario's population will be in urban residency by 1986, compared to 62 per cent in 1941. It is predicted that even northern cities

will show large increases in their populations. Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins and Thunder Bay will increase their population by 50 per cent by 2001, and Sudbury will double its population to 210,000 by that year. Population in the Toronto area will be six to eight million by 1986, compared to 4.7 million now.

Obviously, through development needed to support this growth, the landscape is being drastically altered and wildlife habitat destroyed. With this continuing trend toward urbanization, social attitudes toward wildlife are changing.

Skyscraper canyons and sterile subdivisions offer little enticement for the urbanite to become aware of wildlife and wildlife needs. Nighthawks can perform their evening ritu-



This wild oasis in the heart of suburbia is proposed as a wildlife area.

als unnoticed above the din from the city streets, and a kestrel, in its quest for sparrows, is unobserved. In such an environment, it is easy to lose contact with nature and to believe that wildlife only exists in Walt Disney films. Man can indeed become adapted to starless skies and treeless avenues when his movement to the city has removed him from the realities of the natural world.

There is little doubt, however, that many urbanites are aware of wildlife both in a negative and positive sense. The "home executive", who writes an emotional letter to a government about alleged indiscriminate killing of wildlife, may also complain about bats in his attic, raccoons in his garbage, or cedar waxwings eating his cherries. On the more positive side, many individuals and groups are working hard to preserve what wild islands are left and to increase the consciousness and awareness of the public of wildlife and its requirements.

Interpreting wildlife and wildlife habitat needs in urban centres is one means of at-

tempting to enhance the understanding by urban residents of the ecological principles that govern wildlife populations. The Ministry of Natural Resources is investigating the possibility of setting up a pilot project in a ravine area of Metropolitan Toronto where species abundance and diversity can be increased through habitat management practices. Outdoor interpretive displays will be provided along a carefully constructed trail system that will expose the walker to a variety of wildlife habitats. The trails will present an excellent opportunity for wildlife viewing. Hopefully, exposure to the interpretive messages will motivate the viewer to seek further wildlife experiences.

Why should a provincial agency be interested in urban wildlife or non-game species generally? On the assumption that wildlife does have beneficial effects on the quality of people's lives, effort must be made to reach the majority of people if we want to obtain the maximum educational impact. Urban programs would increase the awareness of



Some cities have a remarkable population of wildlife.

people to the existence of wildlife and its requirements.

We must respond to the urban seat of power, for city people influence many decisions about land use and wildlife management both in urban regions and beyond. This influence will increase as urbanization increases. If it is to be wisely used, it must be based on accurate knowledge. It is essential for urban residents to be aware of sound ecological principles regarding wildlife. I emphasize here the need for adequate information on which urbanites can base their opinions, for only then can they develop a proper perspective or philosophical attitude toward wildlife and its management.

Should the urban wildlife area prototype be successfully implemented, similar projects could be developed in other suitable locations throughout the province. These projects could be developed by the Ministry of Natural Resources, itself, but preferably in concert with other groups such as the National Capital Commission, St. Lawrence Parks Commis-

sion, or municipal authorities.

There are several areas where information is necessary concerning wildlife in an urban environment — habitat requirements, human preferences, and interaction with wildlife. For the most part, urban wildlife exists in “wild islands” that for one reason or another have been maintained. But what about bringing wildlife back into the city? Or how do we attract the more desirable species? Perhaps with only minor modifications in architecture and planning, cities can become attractive to more diverse wildlife populations.

A study of a new city in Maryland monitored the changes in bird populations as development proceeded. Starlings and house sparrows increased greatly for they used architectural features of the new buildings as nest and roosting sites. On the other hand, mockingbirds also increased because of the shrub planting by the new residents. Information of this type should be available to every architect and developer to ensure a more interesting urban wildlife environment. How-



An individual can easily lose contact with nature on crowded streets.

ever, when it comes down to specific knowledge about given species, often little is known. As an initial step in managing wildlife in urban areas, we must be able to identify the habitat components that affect wildlife distribution.

For wildlife to be provided solely for aesthetic enjoyment, we must also know human preferences. We can agree that songbirds add colour and interest to the residential area, but we must remember, as Aldo Leopold once wrote, "There are those who can live without wild things and those who cannot." The 'friendly' raccoon to one household could be a considerable pest to another. We therefore need some basic studies of how urban residents perceive wildlife so that we can determine the parameters at the man-nature interface.

Wildlife in the urban situation is only one important aspect of an increasingly widespread interest by the public in wildlife for non-harvesting purposes. Hiking, viewing, photography and bird watching have grown tremendously over the past few years. This

growth can be demonstrated by the expansion of such organizations as the Canadian Nature Federation, the Bruce Trail Association and the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. Even specialized groups, such as the American Birding Association have been formed to cater to particular needs.

The Ontario Government is beginning to meet its responsibility to the citizens of this Province who have an interest in wildlife by giving some emphasis to non-game programs. The recognition of non-harvest values does not imply or even remotely suggest an anti-hunting attitude. That is another discussion. It does recognize the need that wildlife should be managed for other values besides harvesting.

Traditionally, we have responded to the needs of sportsmen which reflects for the most part their pioneering work in wildlife management. We could probably get along for several years without broadening our focus, but I suggest we must choose the route of serving all the people who have an interest in wildlife. Habitat should be



Cities can provide a diversity of habitat for wildlife.



Urban wildlife centres make it possible to interpret nature to city children without transporting them long distances. Photo by W. A. Creighton.

managed for songbirds, reptiles, butterflies or whatever. Interpretive services should be increased for we must make every attempt to help people better understand what they see.

The transition from managing solely for game species to include programs for non-game should not be difficult because non-game species benefit as much as game species from such features as edge effect and mast-producing shrubs and trees. Leave, for example, some open fields not only for pheasants but meadowlarks and bobolinks as well. Weedy patches will provide winter food sources for tree sparrows and snow buntings. Thistles are an important source of nesting material for goldfinches. Golden-rod galls harbour wintering larvae that are favoured by downy and hairy woodpeckers. A tall dead tree may not only be a choice site for cavity-nesting birds and mammals but also an important perching area for some birds such as raptors. The creation of exposed mudflats in waterfowl areas can be important feeding sites for shorebirds during migration.

It is difficult to initiate new programs in resources management particularly when it is hard to show tangible economic benefits. I do not feel that it is an exaggeration to suggest that traditions and attitudes are slow

to change, but I do feel that with the public support that is now available and given adequate funding, government can implement imaginative programs dealing with non-game species. I further suggest that it is time to greatly expand such programs, for without them, I am convinced that our traditional harvesting interests in wildlife will suffer over the long term.

Wildlife exists in any region only through the sufferance of a technological society. This is especially true in the urban situation. If wildlife, as we know it, is to endure, it may only be through the concern and action of all who are aware of its value. Finally, it has often been stated that wildlife in an urban environment is a measure of environmental quality, but its presence also reflects the values and ethics of our society. Cities are the bastions of the man-dominant ethic. Interested citizens, sportsmen, naturalists and biologists must work together to develop, within urban populations, a deeper understanding and appreciation of nature.

The beaver can cut down a willow tree five inches in diameter in three minutes.

The night hawk perches lengthwise on a tree limb, not crosswise as most birds do.

LAKE-TROUT LAKES ARE SCARCE

Of Ontario's estimated 250,000 lakes, only about 2,000 contain lake trout, and only half of these can be considered first-class habitat. Even so, this small number represents a significant percentage of the world's lake-trout lakes. These deep, cold lakes are particularly sensitive to eutrophication and over-fishing. **THIS RESOURCE NEEDS YOUR PROTECTION.**

DAMS BLOCK FISH

In southern Ontario, only 30 per cent of the spawning and growth habitat of Great Lakes tributary streams is used by migratory trout and salmon. The remainder of this potentially productive habitat is blocked by approximately 130 dams. Many miles of productive stream habitat could be opened to migrating trout and salmon by the removal of unnecessary dams and the installation of fishways.

— R. M. Biette



EGG SNATCHERS

by K. C. Faulkner, Conservation Officer, Maple District
(Photos by William Lanning, staff photographer)

THE Toronto islands provide a varied habitat which has proved to be both good and bad for a large flock of giant Canada geese (*Branta canadensis maxima*). Along with a residential zone, the area includes a large parkland of lawns and trees, numerous lagoons, and some untouched islands.

The habitat must be good for geese because the original flock of one goose, one gander and five goslings, planted in 1959, has increased to approximately 1,000 birds in fifteen years. (This total does not include another large flock of giant Canadas which live along the Toronto waterfront).

At the same time, the situation is bad for the geese that nest and graze close to the Island airport, and the airport people are quite certain that a goose port is a bad habitat for aircraft. A negligent gosling can scare the daylights out of pilots and play havoc with air traffic.

Every spring, usually at the end of April, the airport staff notify the Maple office of the Ministry of Natural Resources when the

geese are nesting. The implication is that they are living with a time bomb.

Fish and wildlife staff act promptly on the signal and collect the goose eggs in the airport zone. This neutralizes the nests that endanger aircraft but rescues the eggs for other flocks elsewhere.

With the assistance of Island park staff, goose eggs are also collected from other zones where the nests are apt to be flooded out or otherwise destroyed.

Each year, about 200 eggs are collected, about one-third of them from the airport zone. They are packed in wood shavings and delivered the same day to the Orillia Rod and Gun Club for incubation. About 60 per cent of the eggs are hatched successfully.

The Orillia club raises the goslings for six or seven weeks, and then they are distributed to various points to strengthen or establish new flocks.

The airport's problem is one reason why we are now realizing good populations of magnificent maxims throughout southern Ontario.
(See next page)



Note improbable nesting site — the railway tracks in the Children's Village on Centre Island. The warning sign is appropriate.



Wherever a knoll stood above water, maximas would build a nest.



Pas de deux. Our agile author manoeuvres adroitly while the maxima mounts an angry confrontation in winged counterpoint.



En garde! When feinting a maxima out of position, beware counter thrust.



Outraged goose repels advances of Ken Faulkner while gander stands alert, ready to pitch in.



High protest. Gerry Haarmeyer got such a clout from a gander's wing that he had a large bruise for many days. Here, he retires behind a defensive straight-arm.



A giant Canada nests close to runway, left foreground. Geese have been known to attack aircraft which came too close to their nest.



Goose nests are found in the rubble and debris along the shoreline and among piles of brick and concrete. Many sites seem unlikely. Right, Alex Smith packs eggs in wood shavings for safe transportation.



Mini maxima emerges from egg. His first contact was Bill Lanning.



Goslings in brood pens await release at the age of five or six days. This lot were turned loose in a controlled area at Toronto zoo. They are native wildlife, but they were new, all new, to many zoo visitors.



If the architecture and setting doesn't betray this as a hunting camp, the dog kennel does.

THE HUNTING CAMP

Report and Photos by John Macfie

Fish and Wildlife Supervisor, Parry Sound District

IN southern Ontario's back woods, the "hunting season" means the deer-hunting season; no more need be said to show where the white-tailed deer fits on a popularity poll of game animals in those parts. Similarly, a "hunting camp" means a deer-hunting camp and nothing else. There are upwards of a thousand of them in the tongue of precambrian shield which protrudes south and east of Lake Nipissing and accommodates the majority of the Province's deer hunters in the traditional two - week - long November hunting season.

Dark and unoccupied except perhaps by forest mice for 11½ months of the year, the hunting camp becomes, in early November, the focus for a ritual rooted in the primitive

male function of bringing home game but adapted to a modern purpose which has more to do with shedding tensions than accumulating meat. It is where men escape once a year from the programmed world to indulge in the camaraderie of the chase. And not shave or watch the language for a week, if it helps.

They go in troops of eight and bag two deer. At least, that was the mean strength and luck of several hundred parties of organized deer hunters who took to the Parry Sound woods in 1973. Beyond that, hunting camps defy generalizing. The camps pictured here constitute a fairly representative cross-section.

(See next page)



This gang “counted out” on the third day of the 1973 season. (Two more hunters are in the camp, barely visible through the trees.) Items of interest are the wheeled deer litter, a common piece of hunting-camp furniture; the distance between camp and deer-pole (it is a fly-in camp where there is no danger of having deer stolen); and the young aspen forest, a regenerating burn which makes good summer and fall deer range.



The second generation of country school houses were sturdily built and more or less hollow inside. School boards sold them cheaply, meeting the basic requirements of a camp.



Many back-woods homesteads that failed as farms have been acquired by deer hunting clubs. Erect a deer pole in the door yard and you have an instant hunting camp.



The white card in the window indicates that the structure sits on Crown land under the authority of a Land Use Permit. The Province stopped issuing permits for new camps in the main deer range about ten years ago when the saturation point was reached. Cabins of cedar logs dragged from the nearest swamp aren't being built anymore, either.



Some "camps" (though rarely the actual buildings) have been in continuous existence for over 75 years. Access used to be chiefly by horse and wagon, but now tractor, all-terrain



vehicles and airplanes do most of the cadging. A group of Parry Sound District clubs hires an entire train to get in and out of its track-side camps.



Nineteenth Century settlers' houses of hewn pine are practically imperishable, given a foundation and a good roof. This one was deep in the forest at the end of the road when it was built in the 1880s, and it still is. The exterior meat cupboard is a common accoutrement of older hunting camps.



Here is the last domain of the box stove.



Venison on the pole and plenty of dry wood at the door. So what if it rains the rest of the week?

